

As California's vast agriculture industry continues to cope with drought and ever-increasing regulation, [I recently joined several of my colleagues](#) in supporting action to assist our alfalfa growers and the many livestock producers who rely on alfalfa as a valuable and nutritious feed source. "Roundup Ready" crops dramatically lower the need for chemical application and other high-cost methods of weed control, thus increasing efficiency and significantly lowering production costs. As such, alfalfa growers and consumers were much encouraged by USDA's approval of Roundup Ready Alfalfa in 2005. Unfortunately, a federal judge ruled in 2007 that the USDA had not sufficiently analyzed the environmental effects of this crop and ordered the Department to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act.

At the time of this ruling, USDA claimed that the EIS would be completed in 18-24 months. However, 30 months have elapsed and the USDA has yet to release a draft of the EIS for public review. For this reason, I joined my colleagues in sending a letter to Secretary Vilsack urging the completion of this document by the 2010 planting season. Maintaining productive agriculture in California is critical to the overall health of the State's economy and I will continue to do all I can to fight frivolous regulation and other barriers to ensure that our farmers and ranchers remain competitive and continue to make California the nation's top agricultural producer.